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GENERAL HUYSER'S MISSION TO IRAN, JANUARY 1979

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

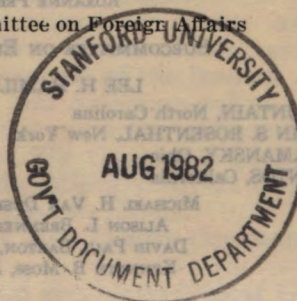
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GENERAL HUYSER'S MISSION TO IRAN, JANUARY 1979

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 1981

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Lee H. Hamilton (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

SCOPE OF HEARING

Mr. HAMILTON. The meeting of the subcommittee will come to order.

The Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East meets today to discuss Iran and United States-Iranian relations.

This hearing and subsequent hearings on United States-Iranian relations are a followup to hearings held before the Committee on Foreign Affairs in January of this year after the release of the American hostages.

Three other subcommittees of the Committee on Foreign Affairs will also be examining aspects of the Iranian situation.

The prime concern of the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East will be a prospective look at United States-Iranian relations. We will want to examine the course of the Iranian revolution, United States interests in Iran, and American policy options.

The purpose of today's hearing is to review the mission of Gen. Robert E. Huyser to Iran in January 1979. General Huyser is currently the Commander in Chief of the Military Airlift Command with headquarters at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

In 1979, when he went to Iran, he was Deputy Commander of U.S. Forces serving in Europe.

Although there has been widespread speculation about General Huyser's nearly 4-week mission to Iran in January 1979, almost nothing has been said on the public record.

General Huyser's visit coincided with several key events in the 1979 Iranian revolution: the departure of the Shah from the country; the rise and fall of the Shahpour Bakhtiar government; the return to Iran of Ayatollah Khomeini after some 15 years of exile; and the installation of the Mehdi Bazargan government.

We hope today to elicit information regarding the purpose and conduct of this mission.

While it is the desire of the subcommittee to conduct as much of this hearing as possible in open session, we are aware that some aspects of this mission may remain sensitive.

Therefore, when there is a quorum of subcommittee members present, we will vote to go into closed session at the appropriate time later in the hearing.

General Huyser, we welcome you before the subcommittee. You may have an opening statement. If you do you may proceed and then we will turn to questions.

STATEMENT OF GEN. ROBERT E. HUYSER, COMMANDER IN CHIEF, MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND, SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, AND SPECIAL EMISSARY TO THE PRESIDENT TO IRAN IN JANUARY 1979

General HUYSER. Mr. Chairman, I have no formal opening statement. I would say that I understand your interest in that there has been more fiction than fact published in the last 2 years about my mission in January of 1979.

In some ways that has been disappointing; because of the credibility of the people that have been writing, you would expect it to have been better. There is a recent book out that is a good example of the lack of fact.

There are opinions expressed that I don't necessarily agree with—but I think people have a right to their own opinions and to draw their own conclusions—but I don't think there can be excuses for the gross lack of fact when published to the American people.

I am ready to take what questions I can in open session.

Mr. HAMILTON. Thank you, General.

PURPOSE OF HUYSER MISSION

Let's begin with the purpose of your mission in January 1979. What was the purpose?

General HUYSER. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I will answer that in general terms in open session and be more specific in executive session.

In general terms I was sent there by the Government of the United States to stabilize the Iranian military and to encourage the Iranian military to support their legal government.

Mr. HAMILTON. Did the purpose of your mission change at all during the 4 weeks you spent in Iran?

General HUYSER. It was dynamic all the way through and, of course, I received guidance almost daily, and I reported my activities daily in an effort to take advantage of circumstances as they occurred.

Mr. HAMILTON. What was your position at the time you were sent to Iran?

General HUYSER. I was the Deputy Commander in Chief of the U.S. Forces in Europe. That is strictly a U.S. Command which is also frequently misrepresented in writings in the press, stating that I was Deputy of NATO. I was General Haig's deputy but on the U.S. side.

Mr. HAMILTON. When were you in Iran?

General HUYSER. I went to Iran on January 4, 1979, and left Iran on February 3, 1979.

Mr. HAMILTON. Was your mission strictly military in character or did it have political aspects to it as well?

General HUYSER. It would be hard to separate the two in that I was encouraging the military to support a political government and encouraging them to make the proper preparations to where they could support and regain some control of the elements of the country.

Mr. HAMILTON. When you went to Iran was the Shah still in power at that point?

General HUYSER. I would answer a little differently than you ask it. The Shah was still in the country at that point.

Mr. HAMILTON. But not in power?

General HUYSER. Still in the country.

Mr. HAMILTON. Were you instructed to oppose any and all coup plans by the Iranian military?

General HUYSER. No; I was not. I had flexibility in what I was to do and as I stated, each day I reported back to our Government here in Washington as to my activities, and we had an open and free discussion on activities to be conducted the next day.

Mr. HAMILTON. Why were you chosen, do you think, for this mission?

General HUYSER. Because I knew the Shah very well and was a friend of the Shah's. He had expressed confidence in me. Contrary to what has been published, I knew the military leaders personally. Some of them I had known for years, some I had known since they were in the junior grades. I was considered to be very close and personal friends with them.

I had worked with the military and the Government of Iran for years in building their military capability. I was intimately familiar with that capability, as the position I held in Europe was that of an overseer of our foreign military sales to Iran.

MEETING WITH THE SHAH

Mr. HAMILTON. Did you see the Shah at all during the time that you were there?

General HUYSER. Yes; I had one visit prior to his departure.

Mr. HAMILTON. Could you tell us about that visit? What transpired?

General HUYSER. Again, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I will deal in general terms and later we can get more specific.

I accompanied Ambassador Sullivan to discuss events in the country. I discussed with the Shah my mission, what I was doing and what I had observed thus far in the country, and there was discussion about his departure plans.

Mr. HAMILTON. By the time you arrived did the Shah know he was going to leave?

General HUYSER. He had indicated in December on two or three occasions a desire to leave. I arrived there on January 4 and as I recall, on January 6 he made an announcement that he intended to take a vacation. I think it was apparent to our Government that he certainly did intend to have a stay outside the country.

INDIVIDUALS TO WHOM GENERAL HUYSER REPORTED

Mr. HAMILTON. While you were in Iran to whom did you report in our Government?

General HUYSER. To the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. HAMILTON. Did you also report to the White House?

General HUYSER. There were occasions when representatives from the White House were on the phone with me. My reports went directly to the President every day.

Mr. HAMILTON. But most of your conversations were directed to the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Brown?

General HUYSER. Yes, sir.

Mr. HAMILTON. And Ambassador Sullivan, was he kept fully informed about everything you were doing while you were there?

General HUYSER. Yes. As a matter of fact, when it became necessary to report back to Washington by secure phone each day and with the difference in time, and to be able to report the day's activity, it became necessary for me to move to the Embassy compound because there was a curfew and you could not travel after certain hours of night.

So I actually lived with Ambassador Sullivan. We discussed all activities openly and, contrary to what has been published in the many, many books that have been written and in the press, we did discuss all aspects.

We did have some differing opinions but we openly expressed these to each other and we openly expressed them to Washington.

WAS THE MISSION A FAILURE?

Mr. HAMILTON. As you look back on your mission, do you think your mission failed?

General HUYSER. In some regards, it did. I accomplished a good portion of what I was asked to do in the specific task. I don't think there is any way to address the overall mission other than to say it was a failure because obviously the military capitulated to other than what was an established legal government at the time shortly after my departure.

Mr. HAMILTON. Do you have any sense that if you had undertaken the mission earlier that it might have succeeded or you might have had a better chance at least of succeeding?

General HUYSER. That would be supposition and conjecture but to tell you my feelings, I had very strong feelings back in August and September 1978, that there should have been more aggressive actions.

Mr. HAMILTON. When you say you were on the telephone occasionally to the White House, to whom in the White House did you speak?

General HUYSER. I spoke with Dr. Brzezinski and I think there were occasions when I spoke with Secretary of State Vance.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mrs. Snowe.

MISSION OF THEODORE ELLIOTT

Mrs. SNOWE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Sullivan had a great deal to say about your mission but prior to your mission there was another mission that was supposed to take place that was with Theodore Elliott who was supposed to be sent as an emissary to see Khomeini. All of a sudden that mission was scratched.

Could you give us information to tell us why that mission was taken off the drawing board? It seemed like the White House was switching to your mission in Iran.

General HUYSER. I would beg to differ with you a bit. That occurred after I was in Iran. Ambassador Sullivan and I happened to agree that we thought it would be well to establish direct contact with the Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris. We were of a common mind on that and when that did not occur, we both expressed our disappointment to our Government.

I don't see how you can talk about that mission as my mission.

Mrs. SNOWE. You say they are two separate events?

General HUYSER. No; I am saying that occurred while I was there. They were not separate missions at all.

Mrs. SNOWE. I see.

General HUYSER. The Ambassador and I agreed that in our opinion it would be a good thing to do.

OPPOSITION TO MISSION

Mrs. SNOWE. Second, what about Alexander Haig? I understand he disagreed with your mission and then resigned. Could you elaborate on that?

General HUYSER. Yes; I will. I won't attempt to speak for General Haig or Secretary Haig, whichever you choose.

We operated very closely together, naturally, he being my immediate superior. We had been very carefully watching the situation in Iran both having very strong feelings about what the military capability there could mean to stability in the area—both having some strong feelings about the leadership in Iran.

At the time that this mission was brought to my attention, I informed the Deputy Secretary of Defense, with whom I was dealing at the time, that a mission of this nature and sensitivity should be brought to the attention of General Haig and that we should get his views on it.

It is true there was a discussion. It is true that he did disagree very strongly at the time with the administration and the approach taken. I would not make an effort to state why, other than we did share between us a common concern about the lateness of the mission and the possibilities of succeeding were almost nil.

I don't know what kind of odds Jimmy the Greek could put on—something of 10,000 to 1 or something of that nature—of the mission ever having any opportunity to be successful because we were too far downstream.

Also, I think it was known at the time that Ambassador Sullivan was not encouraging the introduction of a military man into the equation and, of course, both have respected Ambassador Sullivan's opinion.

Mrs. SNOWE. I will reserve the rest of my questions.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Findley.

VOTE TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION

Mr. FINDLEY. Mr. Chairman, at the proper time I move that the committee go into executive session and make that motion at this time.

Mr. HAMILTON. For the rules the rollcall vote is demanded. Is there a second?

[Motion seconded.]

Mr. HAMILTON. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Chairman Hamilton.

Mr. HAMILTON. Aye.

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congressman Rosenthal.

[No response.]

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congressman Fountain.

[No response.]

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congressman Shamansky.

[No response.]

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congressman Lantos.

Mr. LANTOS. Aye.

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congressman Findley.

Mr. FINDLEY. Aye.

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congresswoman Fenwick.

[No response.]

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congressman Roth.

Mr. ROTH. Aye.

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Congresswoman Snowe.

Mrs. SNOWE. Aye.

Mr. VAN DUSEN. Mr. Chairman, there are five ayes and no nays.

Mr. HAMILTON. The motion is carried. It is the intention of the Chair to proceed as much as we can in public session and we will continue in public session for the next several questions.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Lantos.

Mr. LANTOS. General Huyser, I am delighted to welcome you. As you probably heard, I have been asking that you come before us on many occasions.

I asked about your mission when we had Secretary Muskie and Secretary Haig here and I am delighted to have you here in person.

I will have to treat you very carefully because you will be a constituent of mine very soon as you are moving out to California.

Honoring our chairman's request to try to have as much of the discussion in the public forum as possible, I would like to ask a more than general question, if I may.

MILITARY CAPABILITY TO CONTROL COUNTRY

In any revolutionary situation it seems to me there is a point when the application of strong military force might save the regime in power.

It might not, but at least there is a possibility if military force is exercised early on as the unraveling begins.

I was in Iran in July of 1978. It seemed to me at the time that Iran was very much at the threshold of that point where an internal military coup, the temporary suspension of whatever liberties Iran had, and a strong regime could have basically saved Iran's progress and orientation.

I wonder if you would care to speculate in general terms about this general thesis.

General HUYSER. Yes; I will comment on that, sir, principally because of the way, for better than 2 years, it had been treated in the writings and in the press. As I stated, the credibility of that in most cases as it deals with my mission, is such that it doesn't warrant one's time to read it—such flagrant violations as in the latest book by Ledeen and Lewis, where they talk about when I returned that I was promoted. I don't wear five stars. I wish I had gotten promoted. I was a four-star in 1975.

Then having me have discussions with people that weren't even in the country at that time. That type of flagrant misinformation by supposedly credible people has caused a lot of concern.

I was in Iran just before you at the request of the Shah in April of 1978. He expressed to me at that time his concern of what could happen—and when we do go into executive session I will give you more information.

I completed the mission I had been asked to do by the Shah and went back in August of 1978 to report to him on my accomplishments. During the time I was there Iran had the uprising in Isfahan and declared martial law when they had the theater bombings and the bombings in Tehran. I was of the firm opinion at that time that if stringent actions were not taken things could well get out of hand.

I think there is a tendency for things to grow rapidly and for opposition to always test the system.

I think we have observed that in some other countries that we deal with, where they test the system at every opportunity and unless there is a deterrent force they will proceed.

In my opinion, there was plenty of capability in the military establishment within Iran to control the situation right up through the time I left there. It was never used and I think the only way it could have been controlled at that point was to have used the military.

Mr. LANTOS. Why do you think the military capability was never used, General Huyser?

General HUYSER. That remains a mystery in my mind due to some words that were stated to me by the Shah in August and by the lack of response to a question I asked in January of 1979 which in executive session I will relate to you.

Mr. LANTOS. Let me pursue the military option a bit longer. To people with really no particular expertise on Iran who followed the events from the newspapers, what seemed almost inexplicable was the rapidity of the unraveling of the whole Iranian military in early 1979.

How do you account for the fact that no Iranian military coup took place? Was there really no one within the Iranian military high command, a small group, a junta, that felt that they had to take matters in their own hands to see if they could stem the tide?

General HUYSER. I would remind you, sir, in late October or early November His Majesty the Shah established a military government with the Prime Minister being General Azahri who was a very close friend and their efforts for 2 months were unsuccessful.

I just bring that out as a fact because by the end of December it was obvious they were going to crumble and there had to be a new type of government established.

Thusly, they had the opportunity as a military element to control the country and it failed.

What I found on arrival was that they had no plans whatsoever to take over any element of the country and you having been to Iran or to Tehran, will understand what I am about to tell you.

I arrived there on the 4th of January in midafternoon, a Thursday afternoon. I went from Mehrabad Airport to just below the Palace, and I saw 10 cars on the road. As you know, the normal traffic in Tehran makes New York City look like a kindergarten.

The country was paralyzed. All the stores were closed. There was no media. The banks were closed. Oil production was practically nil. Everything was paralyzed.

This is just subsequent to the opportunity for the military to run the government. So when we get into the executive session I will describe to you the efforts that I undertook to change that.

U.S. INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS IN IRAN

Mr. LANTOS. If I may ask one final question, Mr. Chairman, some people have characterized our intelligence operation in Iran as a colossal failure. What would your appraisal of our intelligence activities in Iran in 1978, early 1979?

General HUYSER. Those words may be good. I am not quite an extremist. I would say it was far less than desired.

Mr. LANTOS. You would agree there was a colossal intelligence failure, wouldn't you?

General HUYSER. I would say it was far less than desired.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Findley.

Mr. FINDLEY. On the question of intelligence, General, did you perceive any reluctance on the part of our Government to communicate with the various elements of the population?

General HUYSER. Which population, sir?

Mr. FINDLEY. Within Iran. I have the impression that our Government in its intelligence-gathering activities restricted itself to dealing with sources confined largely to the ruling elements.

General HUYSER. I don't really think I am qualified to answer that because I didn't have access to what our Government was really doing within the country itself.

Mr. FINDLEY. When you arrived in Tehran, did you expect that the *Constellation* would be in the area and would remain in the area during your tour?

General HUYSER. No. I think our Government had made a proper evaluation of the situation prior to sending me which would speak on their behalf as having done the right thing. It was explained to me that they were of an opinion that the Shah would probably leave the country and if he left the country, knowing how that structure had been, that the military leadership would probably accompany him. Knowing how the military had been trained, that if the leadership did accompany him, there would be complete disin-

tegration of military capability, and, of course, with that there would be no hope of establishing another government.

When I arrived in Iran the perception by the senior military was that the Shah would probably leave the country for a period. In fact, as I stated, a couple of days after I got there he announced that he intended to do that. There was no question in their minds but what they were going to go with him, and they had to be dissuaded, to cause them to stay in the country.

Mr. FINDLEY. So in that circumstance the fact that the *Constellation* remained in Singapore really had no bearing upon the success or failure of your mission?

In other words, the impression I had at the time was that our Government was shifting back and forth. First, it was going to send the fleet in, then it was not going to send it in. I was under the impression the decision to keep the *Constellation* in Singapore really had a negative effect upon your position in Iran and your ability to get things done.

General HUYSER. I don't think directly. I indicated to them, to the military, on many occasions, that our Government would support them, and if there was any external threat certainly we would, and our Government was responsive to requests for needs made by them at the time.

I think it was brought out in the press that it was a very cold January and they were extremely short on warm clothing. I asked our Government to supply warm clothing and warm clothing arrived before I could even get the memorandum of understanding signed. That is how responsive we were.

We were having a great difficulty getting oil in the event the military wanted to conduct any contingency, and I asked our Government to steam a tanker into port and our Government did it. So I don't think there was a lack of indication of support in that respect.

There may have been in other ways, but I will reserve that for executive session.

Mr. FINDLEY. Did you or Secretary Brown at any point urge that the military establishment take over the government?

General HUYSER. I will defer that until executive session.

Mr. FINDLEY. Was there a push for a military takeover of just the oilfield regions or did you make a recommendation of that sort?

General HUYSER. Not specifically but, again, I think we are getting into an area that we can cover more appropriately in executive session.

Mr. FINDLEY. There was a perception throughout the Middle East that the United States had abandoned the Shah and it was substantially because of this U.S. decision that the Shah went down.

In your opinion, was that appraisal an accurate one?

General HUYSER. In my opinion, no.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Roth.

Mr. ROTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY GENERAL HUYSER

I, too, wish to welcome you to our subcommittee, General.

When you were in Iran you saw things firsthand going from bad to worse. I suppose you were in direct communication with the White House; is that right?

General HUYSER. Yes. You might call it more indirect because my contact on a daily basis was the Secretary of Defense who, in turn, immediately reported to the White House, so it was almost direct.

Mr. ROTH. I see what you mean. An important man like you—you are a four-star general—I am sure the President was vitally interested in what you had to say.

Did you tell them the situation—I am sure you did—and ask them to bolster the Shah? What were the recommendations that you made?

General HUYSER. Again, Mr. Roth, I will make a general statement and then we can get more definitive later.

I certainly encouraged all the support that I could get from this country for that country—an expression of support, at least.

The Iranian people are very responsive to what they hear on the news and responsive to other countries. We were receiving in-country information that was less than productive, on BBC, for example, and I expressed the desire many times to have prominent members of our country—Congressmen or prominent individuals or the President or the Secretary of State—publicly make expressions that would counterbalance the less than productive statements that were being made.

Certainly while working with Ambassador Sullivan, we both encouraged support as best we could judge when we should have that support.

There were times and under circumstances for certain elements, which I will also discuss in more detail later, when it would have been counterproductive to express too much support.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND SUPPORT

Mr. ROTH. What happened to your requests for strong responses from some of the Senators or Congressmen or the President? What happened to your suggestions?

General HUYSER. In some cases it was honored and in other cases it was offset by other people's statements. You must recognize, I think, that we can't mirror image those people in our way of thinking. Our press is at liberty to print whatever it so desires. We probably learn to judge a little better what to believe and what not to believe, where their press had been more on the one-line example and they were more or less trained to believe what they read.

Mr. ROTH. So the public diplomacy of the BBC and the Soviets was much stronger than ours?

General HUYSER. Yes. The Soviets were monitoring it very closely, in my opinion. I observed with great interest what the media were saying at the time about my mission in Iran, and I found that the only real accurate reporting was Tass, Pravda and Radio Moscow.

GENERAL HUYSER'S ADVICE TO IRANIAN MILITARY

Mr. ROTH. We had many Iranians in our country, especially in the military and so on. You must have had a rapport with some of our military people, with the people in Iran.

What kind of advice did you give them when they said to you: "Things are unraveling; what do you think is going to happen?"

What kind of advice did you give to your military friends in Iran?

General HUYSER. I constrained myself principally to dealing with the heads of service, the supreme commander, the vice minister of war, the chief of SAVAK and had a few discussions on the nature of my mission with the public.

I had many very close friends—and still do—I don't know how well you know the Iranians but they are a very warm and lovely people by nature. I still have very deep feelings for many Iranians but I did not discuss such things with the public or with friends there due to the nature of my mission.

Mr. ROTH. Thank you.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mrs. Fenwick.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ESTIMATION OF IRANIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT

General, how did you sum up the military establishment in Iran? Was it in your opinion a first-class fighting body? Obviously, they were very well equipped from what one understands. Were they good soldiers? Was it a good fighting machine?

General HUYSER. In my opinion, yes, first-class, particularly I would say their Air Force, which was a mirror image of the U.S. Air Force. All spoke English fluently. The amount of pay they received depended a lot upon their ability to speak English.

All their technical orders were printed in English. They had built things—their squadron operations and buildings, et cetera—as we said they should be; as we would like to have.

I think they are very capable and I think they have proven that subsequent to the time that the Ayatollah took over because even though people thought they completely disintegrated we have seen quite a residual capability.

Mrs. FENWICK. Yes.

General HUYSER. I thought they were very disciplined. They were trained differently to some degree due to the country than we are. I was told over and over again that the training was God, Shah, country, and that is the way they believe.

LACK OF LEADERSHIP BY THE SHAH

Mrs. FENWICK. Did any of them give you any analysis of what had paralyzed the country? When you arrived on the 4th of January and there were only 10 automobiles between the airport and the Palace, did they tell you why?

Did they understand what was going on? What was their reaction?

General HUYSER. Yes. I was told by very senior people their opinions and I happened to share those opinions.

Mrs. FENWICK. What were they?

General HUYSER. Inactivity and lack of leadership of the Shah.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see. Did any of them speak to you about SAVAK and the alienation of the people from the Shah on account of SAVAK or was that not an element?

General HUYSER. Not specifically. I think maybe—to express my opinion—I think maybe that is overplayed in the American press. Their values are different than ours. They operate differently than we do. We talk about SAVAK and what they did. I would like you to compare that with what is happening today.

Mrs. FENWICK. Yes. I can imagine. But what was the reason then? You say lack of leadership. In what direction did they feel a lack of leadership? The Shah had certainly in the beginning increased the educational and hospital facilities of the country. He tried to introduce reforms for education and farming and land reform. What was at the bottom of it, General, as far as you could determine?

General HUYSER. In my opinion—I would agree with you he did a great deal for the country because I saw the country when the valleys of farm land were narrow. I watched dams built, the valleys widened. I watched trees planted. I watched dirt roads turn into superhighways. I watched old buildings turn into hospitals, ghettos turn into nice apartments; watched people subsidize those things they deserved.

The students you saw in this country that were making noises were subsidized by the Shah. Their tuition was paid; they were given a liberal allowance and what he was attempting to do, in my opinion, was to build a middle class.

I think that he expected one day to run out of oil and he wanted to industrialize to the extent it would be a viable nation.

I think the change from the status the country was in before to that of a more modern status, so to speak, doesn't necessarily require a revolution but it certainly takes a transition. As the country went through that transition, I think things had to be tightly controlled.

I am of an opinion that there are other countries that are yet to go through that transition and unless there is good control, they, too, are seeking trouble.

Mrs. FENWICK. I am afraid I don't share your view on that because any time anybody talks about tight control, my back goes up. I don't like the idea of tight control, I cannot see why because you are educated you have to then be tightly controlled. In fact, I should think it would be the opposite.

But perhaps our views are a little different on that.

When did you start going to Iran?

General HUYSER. In the late sixties or early seventies.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see. Did you notice any difference over the years? One person who went every single year as an adviser to the Shah, starting around 1957, told me that he noticed in 1974 a change on the part of the Shah, less enthusiasm for the reforms—the land reform—and educational and medical reforms, and more concentration upon his position and how the people loved him, that sort of talk.

Did you notice anything like that?

General HUYSER. Not really. I found him up to my final visit deeply concerned with his people, deeply concerned with his country.

PURPOSE OF VISIT

Mrs. FENWICK. Could you tell us what your orders were when you went?

General HUYSER. I stated earlier on in general terms that it was to stabilize the military.

Mrs. FENWICK. The military were not in disorder, were they?

General HUYSER. No; but there were indications that they could have been.

Mrs. FENWICK. You mean against the Shah?

General HUYSER. No. Perhaps you weren't present yet when I went through this.

Mrs. FENWICK. I am sorry.

General HUYSER. It was perceived by our Government that the Shah would probably take a vacation from the country, leave the country, and that if he did the senior military probably would accompany him and if that were to occur, knowing the nature of their military, it would be a complete disintegration of their military.

Mrs. FENWICK. Why would the senior military accompany him? I did hear you say that. It puzzled me. Why would they accompany the Shah?

General HUYSER. Due to the nature of the way they had been trained all their lives. I will be happy to discuss that in more detail in executive session.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HAMILTON. The subcommittee will proceed until the second bell rings. The chair recognizes Mr. Winn.

Mr. WINN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

WHO CONTACTED GENERAL HUYSER

General, on your many trips to Iran, how did you offer your services and your expertise for a mission, as you described it. Were you contacted by the Secretary of Defense or anyone? How did you get into the act?

General HUYSER. For the January mission?

Mr. WINN. Yes.

General HUYSER. As best my memory serves me, it was between Christmas and New Year of 1978 when I was first contacted from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs office, I think by his special assistant, asking information about what senior military people knew the senior military people in Iran.

Then again on January 2, as I recall, I was queried quite heavily by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs pertaining to my thoughts about the Iranian military and sending a military man to Iran.

Then on January 3, it appeared it was becoming a serious thought in the mind of our Government to do just that and at that time I told them I thought they should start communicating with General Haig, which they did.

The initiative was on the part of our Government here in Washington.

OPPOSITION TO MISSION BY GENERAL HAIG

Mr. WINN. Did General Haig support, after you suggested they contact him, your participation in the mission to Iran?

General HUYSER. No; he was highly opposed to that mission. That has been publicly stated and I think I can state that factually, not speaking for General Haig.

Mr. WINN. Has that been highly publicized or do you want to talk about some of his objections to the mission in executive session?

General HUYSER. It has been highly publicized. I believe General Haig and I share a common view that we were a day late and a dollar short and I can expound on that more in executive session.

Mr. WINN. According to you, you first heard about it somewhere between Christmas and New Year's, you had a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on January 2d.

General HUYSER. A phone call, sir; all by phone.

Mr. WINN. Thank you.

And on January 4 you were on your way over there or you were there?

General HUYSER. I departed on the 4th and arrived on the 4th.

Mr. WINN. So once a decision was made it was made that it was an urgent mission that they were sending you on?

General HUYSER. Yes, sir.

Mr. WINN. Now you say maybe it was too late. Obviously too late.

How was the mission described to you? Did you have much input into the technicalities of the mission if there were such things or the political decisions?

General HUYSER. I would say none.

Mr. WINN. You had no input?

General HUYSER. No.

Mr. HAMILTON. The subcommittee will stand in recess while we vote. When we return Mr. Winn will continue the questioning.

[Recess.]

Mr. HAMILTON. The subcommittee will resume its sitting, please.

General, we will turn in just a few minutes to the executive session but before we do that I have a few more questions for you.

DID THE U.S. LOSE IRAN?

In your judgment, did the United States lose Iran?

General HUYSER. That is about as big and difficult as you can give a man, isn't it?

I think we must share the blame, yes.

Mr. HAMILTON. Who do you think is to blame for the loss of Iran?

General HUYSER. Probably history will be the only thing that brings that to the forefront. I think that, as indicated before, the leadership within the country, a combination of many factors.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAN

Mr. HAMILTON. What ought we to be doing now, in your judgment?

General HUYSER. My greatest fear today is the same as it was in January 1979, that if you have great turmoil, upheaval, disruption within a country, you have a tendency to ripen the fruit for plucking by the other superpower on this globe and in my opinion that opportunity exists, and the longer that things go in the direction that they are headed, the greater the opportunity, and I think that we should be preparing ourselves in every way possible to be positive that does not occur.

FUTURE LESSONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Mr. HAMILTON. As you look back on your experience there, what kinds of lessons do you draw for the United States for the future?

General HUYSER. I will address that fairly generally and then would like to discuss it more specifically in executive session. In general terms, I think that we should not live under false illusions. By that I mean we should not try to judge what other people do by mirror-imaging what we would do. In all parts of this globe there are different senses of values and we must try to understand those values.

U.S. SUPPORT FOR IRANIAN MILITARY ACTION

Mr. HAMILTON. While you were there did you ever indicate to your contact group of Iranian commanders that in the event of a civil disorder in the country we would be prepared to support military action?

General HUYSER. I met with the military leadership that I indicated to you earlier, Mr. Chairman. Every day I was there with the exception of 1 day and it ranged from 4½ to 7 or 8 hours on each meeting.

On every occasion I indicated that we would support them to keep from having disintegration within the country.

Mr. HAMILTON. Did they expect American action?

General HUYSER. I think they expected Americans to solve their problem.

Mr. HAMILTON. Why do you think the Iranian forces just disintegrated after your departure?

General HUYSER. I have some very definite opinions on that and I would like to reserve those to executive session because there was a rapid transition from the time I left for the next 4 or 5 days into the capitulation of the military. Part of it is based on supposition, part on fact as to why that occurred, and I would be happy to address that specifically later.

RECOMMENDATION TO MAKE CONTACT WITH PRO-KHOMEINI FORCES

Mr. HAMILTON. While you were there were any decisions taken to make contacts with the leaders in the pro-Khomeini forces or groups?

General HUYSER. By whom, sir?

Mr. HAMILTON. By you or did you recommend that to anyone?

General HUYSER. Yes. Of course, as I stated earlier, both Ambassador Sullivan and myself recommended the United States make definite and positive first-person contact with the Ayatollah Khomeini to try to reach some reasoning and understanding.

Mr. HAMILTON. That recommendation was rejected?

General HUYSER. Yes.

Mr. HAMILTON. By whom?

General HUYSER. By our Government.

Also, at the time Mr. Khomeini—Ayatollah Khomeini—was coming back to country, I did recommend that the senior military leadership contact the opposition to establish the ground rules.

I think that is where the Shah picked up in his memoirs a misconception of a recommendation I had made.

Mr. HAMILTON. Did you meet with Prime Minister Bakhtiar at any point?

General HUYSER. Never. Ambassador Sullivan did.

Mr. HAMILTON. He met with him?

General HUYSER. Yes, sir.

Mr. HAMILTON. Did you meet with any of the pro-Khomeini group yourself?

General HUYSER. Never.

Mr. HAMILTON. Did you meet with Mr. Bazargan at any point?

General HUYSER. No, sir.

Mr. HAMILTON. Did you have any contacts with Ambassador Zahedi before, during, or after the mission?

General HUYSER. Yes, sir; all three: before, during and after.

Mr. HAMILTON. What kind of role did he play in this thing?

General HUYSER. I had known him for some time. My contact with him was not a role in my activities. As a matter of fact, the after contact was he had sent me a book and thanked me for my efforts.

ACTIONS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN

Mr. HAMILTON. Do you think that if we had estimated the power of Khomeini correctly we would have done things differently?

General HUYSER. I guess you are using that collective term "we" as our Government.

Mr. HAMILTON. Yes.

General HUYSER. There is only one way I could answer that. It would be yes.

Mr. HAMILTON. Do you think that we overestimated Bakhtiar's chances of success?

General HUYSER. Again using that collective term, I can't see how we estimated it. I always was of the opinion that it was very questionable whether there could be success and there had to be some very positive moves in the country to cause success and there never were positive moves.

Mr. HAMILTON. Are there any other questions for General Huyser before we go into executive session?

Mrs. FENWICK. What would have been a positive move in this regard? What would you call a positive move?

General HUYSER. I will exercise that great privilege that we have in this country of each having opinions. You and I have expressed

outwardly that we disagree on one opinion and I don't think we really do. I think that if we had the time to discuss it we would find we probably agree.

For example, I believe that if you were to observe an element about to take over our Government in this hand, you would think that we need some firm and positive action.

Mrs. FENWICK. Yes.

General HUYSER. Consequently, when you observe in another land an element moving rapidly to take over, I would suggest they should have positive and firm action.

Mrs. FENWICK. That is general. Tell me specifically.

General HUYSER. I don't believe that the Shah should have tolerated the growth of the dissident groups to the extent that they paralyzed his country.

Mrs. FENWICK. All those mob demonstrations.

General HUYSER. That is right. The takeover of the oilfields, the banks, the media. Everything was paralyzed, taken over for what reason? Because the Government lost control. Should that have been allowed?

Mr. HAMILTON. Are there any other questions for General Huyser in open session? If not, the Chair, pursuant to the motion that was adopted earlier, will resolve the subcommittee into executive session and ask those persons who are unauthorized if they would please vacate the room.

[Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the subcommittee proceeded into executive session.]

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHY OF GEN. ROBERT E. HUYSER

General Robert E. Huyser is commander in chief of the Military Airlift Command with headquarters at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. As commander of a specified command he is responsible to the president and the secretary of defense through the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the planning and performance of airlift missions during wartime, periods of crisis and peacetime exercises. He directs the management of all strategic and tactical airlift forces worldwide to insure operational support to unified and specified commands engaged in military operations. During routine peacetime conditions airlift service is provided by the commander of the Military Airlift Command, through the secretary of the Air Force, in his role as executive director of the Single Manager Operating Agency for Department of Defense Airlift Service. He is also responsible for Air Rescue, Air Weather, Aeromedical Evacuation, and Combat Documentation and Audiovisual Systems throughout the world.

General Huyser was born June 14, 1924, in Paonia, Colo., where he graduated from Paonia High School. He later attended Ouachita College at Arkadelphia, Ark., and Modesto College at Modesto, Calif. He was drafted into the Army in April 1943 and in 1944 entered the aviation cadet program. In September 1944 he graduated from flying school and received his pilot wings and commission as a second lieutenant.

During World War II he flew B-29s, in the Southwest Pacific area. In May 1945 he was assigned as a B-29 pilot at Clovis, N.M. From August 1946 to May 1947, General Huyser was an aircraft commander in the 307th Bombardment Wing, MacDill Field, Fla. He next became an aircraft commander in the 93rd Bombardment Wing at Castle Air Force Base, Calif., and in 1950 was assigned to the wing staff as chief of training.

During the Korean War General Huyser was assigned to the Far East Air Forces Bomber Command as chief, combat operations. During that period he flew combat missions in B-29s with the 98th Bombardment Wing.

He returned to the United States in September 1953 and was assigned as chief, Combat Crew Section, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, March Air Force Base, Calif. In February 1957 he became chief, Training Division, for the 92nd Bombardment Wing, Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., and later was named director of operations.

General Huyser returned to Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force in January 1959 as assistant chief and then as chief, Combat Operations Branch. In July 1960 he became chief, Operations Plans Division. He entered the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., in August 1962. After his graduation in July 1963, he served as chief, Concepts Branch, Operations Plans Division, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

In July 1966 he assumed duties as vice commander of the 454th Bombardment Wing at Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., and in December 1966 he assumed command of the 449th Bombardment Wing at Kincheloe Air Force Base, Mich.

General Huyser returned to Headquarters SAC in April 1968 and was assigned to the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, as director, command control, and in February 1970 he assumed duties as director of operations plans and chief, Single Integrated Operational Plans Division, Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff.

His principal involvement in the Vietnam conflict was administering the contingency war plans for SAC headquarters. He planned the B-52 missions, weaponized the target boxes and executed the strikes. He also managed the SAC tanker support for the Southeast Asia area. To insure a complete understanding of the operations, he flew B-52 combat missions over Vietnam and tanker support sorties out of Thailand.

In June 1972 General Huyser was assigned to Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations, as

director of plans. In April 1973 he became deputy chief of staff, plans and operations. He participated in the decision-making processes that resulted in C-130 resources being assigned to the Military Airlift Command and the designation of the Military Airlift Command as the Department of Defense's third specified command.

General Huyser became deputy commander in chief of the United States European Command, Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany, in September 1975, where he was one of the major users of Military Airlift Command airlift support. The European Command is the senior United States military headquarters in Europe and has operational command over Army, Air Force and Navy elements assigned to the command by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There are more than 300,000 personnel assigned from all the services. Its area of responsibility extends from Western Europe through the Mediterranean, the Middle East land mass and North Africa. He assumed his present position in 1979.

He is a command pilot and has flown more than 5,000 hours in SAC bombers, nearly 2,000 hours in SAC tankers, about 1,400 hours in single engine jet aircraft and 1,500 hours in B-25, C-54, T-39 and various light aircraft. His military decorations and awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation emblem, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award ribbon, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship ribbon and Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation ribbon.

He was promoted to general Sept. 1, 1975, with same date of rank.

General Huyser is married to the former Wanda Pflieger. They have two daughters: Cheryl and Christine.



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